

requirement would represent a significant change from current practice. Therefore, if we make this change we would conduct an intensive public relations campaign to alert importers and travelers to the new requirement and encourage compliance. Compliance with this new phytosanitary certificate requirement should significantly reduce the infestation levels in both commercial and non-commercial importations.

As we see it, these are the positive effects of a phytosanitary certificate requirement:

- The quantity of produce brought by travelers would be curtailed, resulting in far fewer infested lots of produce being imported from dooryard gardens and infested countries, thereby reducing the risk of pest introduction.

- Commercial and noncommercial importations would have the added safeguard of a foreign issued phytosanitary certificate, which would certify that the produce was inspected and found to comply with our requirements. The phytosanitary certificate could also be the focal point of APHIS's feedback to countries that inadvertently certify prohibited or infested produce.

- The requirement would be legally sound, based on the Agency's statutory authority, and be in accord with the International Plant Protection Convention.

The negative effects for which we must plan are:

- Despite a public relations campaign, there would be numerous complaints from travelers about seized produce, especially during the first year of enforcement.

- APHIS would have to prepare for increased smuggling because the phytosanitary certificate requirement would essentially prohibit produce brought by travelers.

- All countries shipping produce to the United States would have to provide phytosanitary certificates for all shipments. These countries might have difficulties dealing with the increased workload, and effects might include increases in the number of errors and improperly issued phytosanitary certificates. Importers might assume that improperly issued phytosanitary certificates authorize them to import prohibited produce.

- APHIS would have to prepare guidelines for enforcement of the new requirements.

The phytosanitary certificate requirement would have a strong effect on movements into the United States from Canada and Mexico. In particular, local residents bring a large quantity of

produce across the Mexican border as groceries for local consumption in the United States. Along the border, these groceries are known as "mandado".

If a phytosanitary certificate requirement is imposed, all fruit and vegetable mandado would be subject to it. However, the current systems for issuing phytosanitary certificates in Mexico do not make it feasible for customers in retail stores and fruit and vegetable stands to obtain certificates so that they could legally bring their purchases into the United States. Therefore, unless the system for issuing certificates in Mexico changes significantly, imposition of a phytosanitary certificate requirement would mean that persons would be unable to practically and legally import mandado into the United States. Based on our many years' experience in examining mandado on the Mexican border, we believe that admissible fruits and vegetables in mandado do not present a significant pest risk. We also recognize that the phytosanitary certificate requirement could result in inconvenience and increased costs for thousands of persons who daily bring Mexican fruits and vegetables across the border for consumption in the United States.

A somewhat similar situation might apply with regard to the Canadian border, although there is less traffic of this sort from Canada. We welcome suggestions on how to accommodate movements for local consumption from Canada and Mexico without sacrificing quarantine effectiveness. We also welcome comments on any other issue related to a possible proposal to require phytosanitary certificates to accompany all produce imported into the United States.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 150dd, 150ee, 150ff, 151-167, 450, 2803, and 2809; 21 U.S.C. 136 and 136a; 7 CFR 2.17, 2.51, and 371.2(c).

Done in Washington, DC, this 27th day of July 1995.

Lonnie J. King,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 95-19184 Filed 8-3-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

7 CFR Part 319

[Docket No. 94-116-4]

Importation of Fresh Hass Avocado Fruit Grown in Michoacan, Mexico; Public Hearings

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of public hearings.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is hosting five public hearings on the proposed rule on the importation of fresh Hass avocado fruit grown in Michoacan, Mexico, that we published in the **Federal Register** on July 3, 1995.

DATES: The public hearings will be held in Washington, DC, on August 17 and 18, 1995; in Flushing, NY, on August 22, 1995; in Homestead, FL, on August 23, 1995; in Chicago, IL, on August 28, 1995; and in Escondido, CA, on August 30 and 31, 1995. Each public hearing will begin at 9 a.m. and is scheduled to end at 5 p.m.

ADDRESSES: The public hearings will be held at the following locations:

1. Washington, DC: Jefferson Auditorium, U.S. Department of Agriculture, South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC.
2. Flushing, NY: Best Western Midway Hotel, 108-25 Horace Harding, Flushing, NY.
3. Homestead, FL: Redland Country Club, 24451 SW. 177th (Crone) Avenue, Homestead, FL.
4. Chicago, IL: Holiday Inn—O'Hare International, 5440 North River Road, Chicago, IL.
5. Escondido, CA: California Center for the Arts, 340 North Escondido Boulevard, Escondido, CA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Victor Harabin, Head, Permit Unit, Port Operations, PPQ, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 136, Riverdale, MD 20737-1236, (301) 734-8645, or FAX (301) 734-5786.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Five public hearings will be held on the notice of proposed rulemaking on the importation of fresh Hass avocado fruit grown in Michoacan, Mexico, published by the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) in the **Federal Register** on July 3, 1995 (60 FR 34831-34842, Docket No. 94-116-3). The first public hearing will be dedicated exclusively to the scientific basis for that proposed rule. This first hearing will be open to the public, but participation will be limited to experts in the fields of pest risk assessment and pest risk mitigation measures. Four additional hearings will be held to provide a full opportunity to all interested parties to address every aspect of the proposed rule.

The First Public Hearing—Presentations by Experts in Risk Assessment

The first public hearing, on the scientific basis for this proposed rule, is

scheduled to be held in Washington, DC, on August 17 and 18, 1995. This hearing will focus exclusively on the APHIS pest risk assessment documents upon which the proposed rule is based, and will provide an opportunity for experts in relevant disciplines to present their views on those documents and the scientific issues raised by them.

The APHIS pest risk assessment documents upon which the proposed rule is based identify the plant pest risks associated with the importation of Hass avocados grown in approved orchards in approved municipalities in Michoacan, Mexico, discuss the mitigation measures identified as reasonable and necessary to prevent the introduction of plant pests into the United States, and contain a quantitative risk analysis examining the likelihood of plant pest introduction into the United States if Hass avocados are allowed to be imported under the conditions described in the proposed rule.

Participation in the Washington, DC, hearing will be limited to those who register and who identify themselves as having expertise in the areas of pest risk assessment and mitigation measures. Experts wishing to participate will be asked to furnish for the record their educational background and their expertise and qualifications relevant to pest risk assessment and mitigation measures. Such experts include scientists, technical experts, and academicians expert in entomology, plant health, plant pathology, risk assessment, and risk mitigation. Federal, State, and local officials, growers, and handlers who have experience with risk assessment, plant protection, quarantine, or risk mitigation measures will also be welcome to participate in this first public hearing.

Presenters are welcome to register as a panel if they believe a panel of experts from several fields would foster a more complete discussion and evaluation of issues related to the pest risk assessment underlying this proposal.

Additional Public Hearings

Four additional hearings will be held during the period between August 22, 1995, and August 31, 1995, to address all aspects of this proposed rule. These four public hearings are scheduled to be held in Flushing, NY, on August 22, 1995; Homestead, FL, on August 23, 1995; Chicago, IL, on August 28, 1995; and Escondido, CA, on August 30 and 31, 1995.

Any interested party may appear and be heard in person, or through an attorney or other representative. We are interested in obtaining the views of the

public on all aspects of the proposed rule, including the APHIS pest risk assessment documents and the conclusions contained therein.

General Information Applicable to All Five Public Hearings

The APHIS pest risk assessment documents upon which the proposed rule is based are available. Parties interested in receiving copies may obtain them by contacting APHIS' Legislative and Public Affairs Staff at (301) 734-3256 or by writing to Legislative and Public Affairs, 4700 River Road Unit 51, Riverdale, Maryland 20737-1232. Copies of the risk assessment documents will be available at each of the scheduled public hearings.

Persons who wish to speak at the hearings will be asked to provide their names and their affiliations. Those who wish to form a panel to present their views will be asked to provide the name of each member of the panel and the organizations the panel members represent. Parties wishing to make oral presentations may register in advance by calling the Regulatory Analysis and Development voice mail at (301) 734-4346 and leaving a message stating their name, telephone number, organization, and location of the hearing at which they wish to speak. If a party is registering for a panel, the party will also be asked to provide the name of each member of the panel and the organization each panel member represents.

The hearings will begin at 9 a.m. and are scheduled to end at 5 p.m. each day. The Washington, DC, and Escondido, CA, hearings may conclude at any time on the second day if all persons who have registered to participate have been heard. Similarly, the other three hearings may conclude earlier than 5 p.m. if all persons who have registered have been heard. The presiding officer may extend the time of any hearing or limit the time for each presentation so that everyone is accommodated and all interested persons appearing on the scheduled dates have an opportunity to participate.

Registration for each hearing may be accomplished in advance in accordance with the above-described instructions, or by registering with the presiding officer between 8:30 a.m. and 9 a.m. on any hearing day.

A representative of APHIS will preside at each public hearing. Written statements are encouraged, but not required. Any written statement submitted will be made part of the record of the public hearing. Anyone who reads a written statement should

provide two copies to the presiding officer at the hearing. A transcript will be made of each public hearing and the transcript will be placed in the rulemaking record and will be available for public inspection.

The purpose of these public hearings is to give all interested parties an opportunity to present data, views, and information to the Department concerning this proposed rule. Questions about the content of the proposal may be part of a commenter's oral presentation. However, neither the presiding officer nor any other representative of the Department will respond to the comments at the hearing, except to clarify or explain the proposed rule and the documents upon which the proposal is based.

Done in Washington, DC, this 31st day of July 1995.

Lonnie J. King,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 95-19183 Filed 8-3-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-34-P

9 CFR Part 94

[Docket No. 95-050-1]

Uruguay; Change in Disease Status

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Proposed rule.

SUMMARY: We are proposing to declare Uruguay free of rinderpest and foot-and-mouth disease. As part of this proposed action, we would add Uruguay to the list of countries that, although declared free of rinderpest and foot-and-mouth disease, are subject to restrictions on meat and other animal products offered for importation into the United States. Declaring Uruguay free of rinderpest and foot-and-mouth disease appears to be appropriate because the last outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Uruguay occurred in 1989, there have been no vaccinations for foot-and-mouth disease in Uruguay since June 1994, and rinderpest has never existed in Uruguay. This proposed rule would remove the prohibition on the importation into the United States, from Uruguay, of ruminants and fresh, chilled, and frozen meat of ruminants, although those importations would be subject to certain restrictions. This proposed rule would also relieve certain prohibitions and restrictions on the importation, from Uruguay, of milk and milk products of ruminants.